found *in situ.* It occurs on the large stems of *Laminaria digitata*, and appears to be an inhabitant of deep water, being only found cast up after storms. Mr. Dickie says, "After comparing numerous fresh specimens of *G. rostratum* and *D. alata,* I feel convinced that there is no essential difference in the structure and outward form of the fruit in these plants. In both the ternate granules are terminal and axillary, and the capsules occupy the same position. The seeds, however, differ in form, those of *D. alata* are mostly oval; in the other they are spherical."

3. On some anomalies in form in *Scolopendrium vulgare.* By Mr. Joseph Dickson.—The fronds exhibited by Mr. Dickson presented every possible variety of shape, from lanceolate to reniform, and from entire to lobed or rather digitate. The more usual form is certainly entire and *oblongo-lanceolate,* and it is difficult to account for the freaks of form which not unfrequently occur in this species of fern.

After these papers were read, Professor Graham exhibited some very beautiful and interesting specimens of exotics from his own green-houses, and the Society then accompanied him in a walk through the garden, which presented a most gratifying appearance.

GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—MR. LONSDALE.

We regret to hear that the Geological Society of London will shortly be deprived of the services of their invaluable Curator and Librarian, Mr. Lonsdale. Intimately connected as we have been for many years with this Society, we can well appreciate the sorrow which this announcement has caused to all the members,—who thoroughly estimate the high qualities of this eminent person, and entertain the deepest gratitude for the devotion and unrivalled skill with which he has, during the last thirteen years, arranged their collections and conducted the publication of their volumes. Mr. Lonsdale's retirement, we are grieved to say, is occasioned solely by the state of his health: and to this notice of the loss which the Geological Society is very soon to suffer, we shall only add our hope, that a naturalist and man of letters may be found competent to succeed him as editor of the Geological Transactions*.

MISCELLANEOUS.

STERNA ARCTICA.

A FLOCK of the *Sterna arctica* made its appearance on the 8th inst. on the river Avon in this county. Several specimens were shot, three of which I have had an opportunity of examining, and it is remarkable that all these were females. Their ovaries being very slightly developed, it appears that their breeding time was still distant, and we may therefore conclude that these birds were on their return to the northern regions, after a winter sojourn in the south. Whatever the cause, the appearance of this species so far inland, and at such a season, is I believe a very unusual circumstance.

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* Upon this subject we believe that application may be made to the President and Council of the Society at Somerset House.—[EDIT.]

H. E. Strickland.

Worcestershire, May 16, 1842.

Since I sent a few days ago a notice of the occurrence of the Arctic Tern on the river Avon in this county, I have obtained evidence of the simultaneous appearance of this bird over a large extent of country. No less than forty specimens procured on the 8th and 9th inst. were brought to one bird-stuffer at Evesham, and the Bristol papers state that on the same day (the 8th) these birds were so abundant at Clevedon, Weston and Bristol, that more than 200 individuals were killed at the latter place. They have also been obtained in considerable numbers higher up the Severn, as at Tewkesbury and Worcester, and it is said also at Hereford, Devizes, and Trowbridge.

My friend J. Walcot, Esq., informs me that near *seven hundred* were seen at Cofton Hall, near Bromsgrove, and that those obtained near Worcester consisted of about as many males as females.

These facts indicate that the Arctic Tern migrates in large bodies from south to north at the return of spring. We may attribute their unexampled appearance so far inland to the westerly winds which prevailed on the 7th and 8th, combined with the peculiar funnel-shaped form of the Bristol Channel, which seems to act like the "pipe" of a decoy-pond. Let us suppose a flock of Terns or other sea birds to have past the Land's End with the intention of migrating northwards through St. George's Channel, but to be driven by westerly winds into the wider parts of the Bristol Channel. Their locomotive instincts being as it were in a state of *polarity*, they would refrain from retracing their lost ground to the westward, but would be tempted to follow the estuary of the Severn, trending as it does gradually towards the north. But alas! as the direction of the delusive stream becomes more favourable to their object, so do its shores contract, till these arctic wanderers find themselves on a narrow river winding its way through verdant fields and woods. Bewildered by the novelty of their situation and deceived in their hopes of a north-west passage, the poor birds fly in despair over the surrounding country and fall victims to the gun of the ornithologist or of the idle poacher. Few, if any, succeed in crossing the midland counties to the Mersey, and in revisiting the beloved shores of the Orkneys.

It is, I think, a probable supposition, that we are indebted to the peculiar form and position of the Bristol Channel for the frequent occurrence of various marine birds in the central parts of England.

H. E. Strickland.

Worcestershire, May 23, 1842.

During the high winds that prevailed on Sunday last, our harbour and floating-docks were visited by large flights of a rare and beautiful species of bird, the *Sterna Arctica*, or Arctic Tern. The birds were assembled in such vast numbers, that two or three hundred were killed with stones and other missiles, whilst several were caught alive; and so tame were they, that many were observed to pitch on the backs of passers-by. This tern, as its name indicates, is a native of the higher arctic regions, and has been met with in all the late expeditions to the Polar Seas. It is a summer visitant to the coasts of Scotland and the north of England, but is rarely met with more southerly, and until the present, there was no instance on record of a specimen having been obtained in this neighbourhood. The appearance of such vast flights of Arctic birds, rare as a species, in the very heart of a large city, is an occurrence as remarkable as it is interesting. Flocks of these birds were also observed the same day at Clevedon, Weston, and other places along the channel coast.—*Bristol Mirror.*

[We have heard from other correspondents that these Terns have also made their appearance in numbers at Swansea and Monmouth on the west of the Severn, and in Dorsetshire, Cornwall, and at Bridgewater on the east.—Ed.]

NORFOLK BIRDS.

J. H. Gurney, Esq. of Norwich, favours us with the following information :—

I beg to mention that a specimen of the Stilt Plover which has not been killed in Norfolk for many years, was shot a few days since at Hickling near Yarmouth; it is apparently a bird of last year, and is a female, containing ova of about the size of a shot.

A specimen of the Avocet was also killed at or near Yarmouth a few days since. This bird is now extremely rare here, though within the memory of many now living it bred plentifully every spring on some parts of our coast.

Since my last I have had a second specimen of the Richard's Pipit killed at Yarmouth, and also a specimen of the Hoopoe killed at Trimingham near Cromer.

A Shark was caught off the latter place about six weeks since, which I believe to be of the species described as the " Greenland Shark." It is about five feet long and of a dull purple colour, and is now in the Norwich Museum.—J. H. Gurney.

Norwich, May 9, 1842.

Since writing to thee a few days since, I have seen a specimen of the Grey-headed yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla neglecta*) which was killed about a fortnight since at Sherringham on this coast. It appears to be a male bird, and I have some reason to think that another Wagtail which was killed about the same time and place, but which unfortunately was not prepared, was the female belonging to it. As I believe this to be the first instance of the bird having been noticed in this county, I think it may perhaps be worth recording.

I am, respectfully,

May 16, 1842. J. H. Gurney.

MR. HASSALL ON SHOWERS OF POLLEN.

The American Journal of Science and Arts for January 1842 (p. 195), contains some interesting remarks relative to two showers of pollen, one of which fell at Troy, New York, the other in the harbour of Picton, a portion alighting upon a vessel in the harbour on a serene night in June, and having to be collected and thrown over by the bucket-full in the morning. A small quantity of each of these powders was preserved and sent to Professor J. W. Bailey to submit to microscopic examination; this gentleman ascertained that the powder which fell at Picton was wholly composed of the pollen of a species of pine; and that that from Troy was made up of pollen from various trees, but Professor Bailey was not able to state positively what plants furnished it. Figures of the three forms of pollen granules met with in the powder from Troy accompany Professor Bailey's letter: from an examination of these I find that two of them are to be referred to some endogenous plant, one of them most probably to a species of grass, the other perhaps to the genus *Nymphæa,* and that the third form is undoubtedly the pollen of an exogen not unlikely to be the *Corylus.* Professor Bailey thinks that no part of the powder can be sporules of *Lycopodium,* because he remarks our species of that genus do not flower until July or August, whereas the powder in question fell in May. I arrive at the same conclusion, but for a different reason; the sporules of *Lycopodium* do not present at all the structure of any one of the three figures. It is beautiful to observe, and observe it we ought wherever we can, how simply, and yet how effectually, nature contrives for the fulfilment of all her varied purposes.

In Monœcious and Diœcious plants the male and female flowers are placed either on different branches of the same tree, or on different and sometimes distant trees, and consequently much less within the influence of each other; whence the ordinary provision of pollen might often be ineffective. To avoid this an immense quantity of stamina is provided for the elaboration of a corresponding quantity of pollen, and we find also that these stamina are generally placed in pendulous and graceful tassels moved by the slightest breath of wind which dislodges clouds of pollen from them to be diffused far and near through the atmosphere, and finally to alight upon the destined point of almost microscopic proportion. So great is the quantity yielded by the different species of pine, that not unfrequently the ground beneath them may be observed to be entirely covered with saffron-like dust of the pollen. There are, I believe, well authenticated tales of date trees having been fertilized though distant from the male tree some miles. A. H. Hassall.

Cheshunt, Herts, March 20th, 1842.

CRATERIUM PYRIFORME.

A supposed microscopic fungus, *Craterium pyriforme,* is mentioned by Prof. Bailey, in p. 195 of Silliman's Journal, as having been sent from Clapham Common by Dr. Mantell; and is described as being found adhering to the surface of flints, and emitting a blood-red liquid on being punctured.

From the examination of some specimens at the meeting of the Microscopical Society, it proves to be the operculum of the nidus of an *Acarus*: some were found in the act of hatching.

PHOTOGRAPHY.

A valuable application has been made by Captain Ibbetson of a Photogenic process for rapidly producing perfect drawings of fossil shells on metallic plates, from which, when fixt by the engraver's tool, lithographic transfers may be rapidly multiplied to an almost indefinite extent. This process promises to be applicable to organic remains of every kind, and consequently of great utility in Palæontology. From a beautiful fossil starfish I sent by one day's mail to Captain Ibbetson, in London, I received, by the next mail, a parcel of most exact impressions, taken from a photographic drawing, transferred to stone by the process above mentioned.—*Dr. Buckland's Anniversary Address to the Geological Society*, 1841.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF BLUMENBACH.

The death of Blumenbach was briefly recorded in our sixth volume, p. 234. The account of this distinguished man is from Dr. Buckland's Anniversary Address to the Geological Society.

Professor Blumenbach died at Göttingen on the 22nd of January 1840, in the 89th year of his age: he was born at Gotha, May 11, 1752, and early imbued with a taste for natural history and medicine by his father, a native of Leipsic, who died in 1787, in the office of Pro-rector and Professor in the Gymnasium at Gotha. At the age of 17, A.D. 1769, he began his academical career at Jena by the study of literature under Baldinger, and of natural history and archæology under his relative Professor Walch, and three years after proceeded to Göttingen to complete his studies, where he immediately became intimate with Heyne, Professor Büttner, and Michaelis, whose son was then a fellow-student in medicine. The rich collection of voyages and travels to which he had access in the library of Professor Walch, suggested to him, as the subject of his exercise for his Degree of Doctor, a dissertation on the native varieties of the human race, which became the first germ of his future extensive researches in Anthropology, in which he derives the three great varieties of the human family from a primary stem of the Caucasian race. His first public employment was a gratuitous undertaking to arrange the cabinet of natural history which the University had purchased from Professor Büttner, which soon brought him favourably to the notice of the minister and curator of the University. In 1775 he was appointed a Private Teacher in Natural History; in the following year an Extraordinary Professor, and in 1778 an Ordinary Professor of Medicine and Natural History in the University of Göttingen.

In 1784 he became a Member of the Royal Society of Göttingen; in 1788, a Counsellor; and in 1812, perpetual Secretary of the Class of Physics and Mathematics in the same Society. In 1816 he was appointed a Member of the Superior Council of Medicine, and in 1821, a Commander of the Guelphic Order. His talent as a lecturer, and profound knowledge of medicine, anatomy and natural history, soon made Göttingen a centre of attraction to the